

VZCZCXRO3557
PP RUEHLN RUEHSK RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHDBU #1333/01 3350401
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P R 010401Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0948
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 2047

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 DUSHANBE 001333

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [TI](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY DUSHANBE NOMINEES TO PRESIDENTIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
SUMMIT AND PROPOSED PD ACTIVITIES

REF: STATE 112468

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¶1. Following is Embassy Dushanbe's list of ten nominees to the Presidential Entrepreneurship Summit (reftel). More background can be provided upon request for any nominee. Embassy notes that though most nominees are members of successful companies in Tajikistan, this is a very poor country, and few may be in a position to travel to Washington at their own expense. Post accordingly requests that if any of these nominees are selected, Washington consider making financial resources available.

¶A. Manuchehr Kurbonali, Office Manager, Qatari Diar Company in Dushanbe

Qatari Diar, a company owned by the Emir of Qatar is launching a \$200 million residential, commercial, and business park in Dushanbe, and Mr. Kurbonali has been chosen to head the company's local office here. Mr. Kurbonali a young but experienced Tajik businessman, who has run several companies that supply medical equipment. He has a thorough knowledge of the Tajik market, as well as the various forces at play behind it, and he is an open and thoughtful interlocutor. He speaks excellent English.

¶B. Anvar Yakubov, Director of Free Economic Zone, Khujand, Sughd Oblast

Mr. Yakubov was selected this year to head Tajikistan's first Free Economic Zone in the country's second largest city, Khujand. Prior to this he served as the head of the Investments and State Property Committee in Tajikistan's northern Sughd Oblast, and before that as Economic Advisor to the oblast's Chairman. Mr. Yakubov is an open and genial person, very knowledgeable about business in the country, and is a rather thoughtful government official operating in a new area. He does not speak English.

¶C. Zaid Saidov, Chairman of the Association of Manufacturers and Entrepreneurs of Tajikistan

Mr. Saidov is one of Tajikistan's more successful businessmen, and also a member of the political opposition -- an increasingly rare phenomenon. He is mostly active in the construction sector, although he also owns a textile production factory. He earlier served in government as the Minister of Industry, having been nominated by the Tajik opposition through President Rahmon's "30% opposition quota," established in the wake of the civil war. While no longer in government, Mr. Saidov remains influential. He does not speak English.

¶D. Jamshed Rahmonberdiev, CEO, Somon Capital

Mr. Rahmonberdiev is one of the youngest businessmen in Tajikistan, and also one of the most enthusiastic. Somon

Capital is poised to become Tajikistan's largest investment company, and Mr. Rahmonberdiev is one of the few people in the country with the technical expertise, the business savvy, and the political knowledge necessary to operate the firm. He not only speaks three languages fluently but knows the economic culture of the United States, Tajikistan, and Russia well enough to help bridge the gaps that often emerge between investors in these three countries. Much of his expertise about the U.S. comes as a former exchange program participant and Department of Commerce employee. Unlike many top business leaders, Rahmonberdiev is remarkably optimistic about Tajikistan's potential and capacity. He speaks fluent English.

E. Bahtier Muminov, Technical Director, Babilon Mobile Company

Babilon Mobile is the most successful company in Tajikistan's most developed economic sector, and Mr. Muminov is one of the foremost telecommunications experts in Tajikistan. While many of Tajikistan's sectors have languished in a post-Soviet malaise, due to the foresight of a former minister and subsequent developments, telecommunications companies have been competitive, innovative, and profitable here. One of the world's poorest countries, half of Tajikistan's population nevertheless own mobile phones. There are eleven competing cell phone companies, far more than in any of the neighboring countries. Telecommunications is also one of the few sectors in Tajikistan able to engage and employ talented technicians; most students seeking or achieving advanced education go abroad, leading to worrisome brain drain. Mr. Muminov is one of those experts. He does not speak English.

F. Shukur Masharipov, Head of Hatlon Oblast Indigo Cell Phone Operator

Mr. Masharipov is another telecommunications success story. He became head of the Indigo Cell phone operator in Hatlon Oblast since the company's inception nearly a decade ago. Indigo, a

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for-profit venture launched by the Agha Khan Development Network, has since become the second most successful mobile operator in Tajikistan. Mr. Masharipov has been very effective in building Indigo's client base in one of Tajikistan's poorer regions. He does not speak English.

G. Daler Djumaev, General Director, Pamir Energy

Another Agha-Khan company, Pamir Energy is Tajikistan's only private power company, operating in the remote Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO). Mr. Djumaev displays a rare combination of western analytical skills and local understanding. Unlike the state energy operator, Pamir Energy is a profitable company. It achieves these results by delivering better service at a higher price to its clients. In many ways this is a novel concept in Tajikistan, and Mr. Djumaev has had his hands full developing this business model in the country's most remote region. It is a testament to his skills that he has continued to successfully operate Pamir Energy under such challenging circumstances. He speaks English.

H. Odil Sangov, First Deputy Chairman of the Tajik Chamber of Commerce

The Tajik Chamber of Commerce is the number one promoter of Tajik businesses and business interests. It operates numerous exhibitions, meetings, and forums dedicated not only to the country's business environment as a whole, but to promote different sectors. Mr. Sangov is one of the country's most knowledgeable business authorities, and can speak easily about many of the issues affecting businesspeople here. He has a PhD in economics and speaks some English.

I. Firuz Bulbulov, General Director, ABG Consulting Company

Mr. Bulbulov is one of the few experts in Tajikistan who is not afraid to start a consulting company here. Given Tajikistan's

still undeveloped economy, consulting is a new sector here, and there are few key players. Mr. Bulbulov has entered the market with enthusiasm, and has an excellent understanding of the business climate here. He speaks good English.

¶J. Faridun Rahmatov, Director, Wakefield Inspection Services in Central Asia

Cotton production is one of the few competitive sectors in Tajikistan, but it is also one of the most burdened by Soviet practices and mentality. Wakefield and Mr. Rahmatov have managed to meet several challenges associated with these issues.

Wakefield operates with practically all of the country's cotton producers, despite the competition among them. It has also successfully brought western business practices and expertise to a sector notorious for rigging harvest numbers and employing forced labor. The agricultural sector holds a great deal of promise for Tajikistan, but it will take a good deal of work by people like Mr. Rahmatov to realize that promise. He speaks English.

PROPOSED PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ACTIVITIES

¶2. As requested in paragraphs 10 and 11 of reftel, below is a summary of proposed public diplomacy activities for the Summit and for lead-up and related activities. Lead-up activities in Dushanbe can include the following:

¶A. A roundtable for the ten nominated entrepreneurs and other economic contacts. Post will include a local speaker who is knowledgeable on business development and social entrepreneurship in Tajikistan, and possibly another via digital video conference. This would fall in late December.

¶B. A speaker series that will utilize the chosen Summit entrepreneurs to speak to university economics classes and at American Corners about their experience starting a business and how students can do something similar. These speaking engagements will take place after the spring semester starts back up in mid-January.

¶C. A Mentor/Mentee program in which western businesspeople and leading Tajik entrepreneurs, including the ten we mention above, mentor young local entrepreneurs regarding their business development. Mentoring would be scheduled as convenient for all parties, but should include the mentor going to the mentee's business several times and discussing ways to improve his/her business. As a follow-on, the entrepreneurs each pick one senior economics student and mentor them on starting a business. These activities would take place between January and May, 2010.

¶3. Post's proposed Summit activities include business

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partnerships, internships and microloans, as described below.

¶A. Develop partnerships between Tajik Summit participants and successful Central Asian business people in America. Via these partnerships the Summit participants will make contacts with American businesses and markets, encouraging investment in both directions, and also develop stronger diaspora interest in Tajikistan. Ongoing information-exchange partnerships should be encouraged.

¶B. Mentees can be provided with a short internship in an American business similar to their own, or in one of the Summit participants' businesses, if feasible. Participating in the internship will teach them how to utilize and develop the capacity of interns in their own businesses.

¶C. Mentees can be assisted with microloans to fund ideas they have that will help develop their businesses. We may be able to obtain matching funds from experienced Summit participants.

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